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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 004460

SIPDIS

PARIS PLEASE PASS TO U/S BOLTON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/26/2013

TAGS: [EU](#) [IT](#) [MARR](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: ARTICLE 98/ITALY: NO CHANGE IN ROME'S POSITION

CLASSIFIED BY: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR THOMAS COUNTRYMAN, REASONS
1.5 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) DURING A SEPTEMBER 26 MEETING DEVOTED TO OTHER ISSUES,
POL MC RAISED THE ISSUE OF ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENTS WITH CLAUDIO
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BISOGNIERO, DEPUTY TO MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR ARAGONA. NOTING
THE SCHEDULED OCTOBER 1 MEETING BETWEEN UNDERSECRETARY BOLTON
AND ARAGONA, POL MC REMINDED ARAGONA THAT THE USG CONTINUES
TO ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO PROTECTION OF AMERICAN
PERSONNEL, AS ALLOWED BY THE TREATY OF ROME. SOME 65
COUNTRIES HAVE NOW SIGNED ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENTS WITH THE US.
WE REMAIN EAGER TO BUILD ON THIS MOMENTUM BY CONVINCING OUR
CLOSEST FRIENDS IN THE EU TO JOIN THIS GROUP. POL MC ASKED
IF ITALIAN THINKING ON THE ISSUE HAD EVOLVED RECENTLY.

2. (C) BISOGNIERO NOTED THAT IT WAS ITALY AND LIKE-MINDED
COUNTRIES, NOTABLY THE UK, WHICH HAD PREVENTED THE EU, LAST
YEAR AND AGAIN THIS YEAR, FROM ESTABLISHING A MORE HARD-LINE
POSITION ON THE NEGOTIATION OF SUCH AGREEMENTS. ITALY
SUBSCRIBES FULLY TO THE COMMON EU POSITION, WHICH DOES NOT
RULE OUT BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AS LONG AS CERTAIN CRITERIA ARE
MET. BISOGNIERO SAID THAT THIS ITALIAN POSITION HAD NOT
CHANGED SINCE THE BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS IN ROME LAST OCTOBER
WITH AMBASSADOR LINO. AS USEFUL AS THOSE DISCUSSIONS HAD
BEEN, ITALY WAS STILL AWAITING ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS
REFERRED BACK TO WASHINGTON, ESPECIALLY ON THE CENTRAL ISSUE
OF SCOPE. WHILE THE MFA IS ALWAYS HAPPY TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE
WITH U/S BOLTON, IT VIEWED REACHING A COMMON DEFINITION OF
SCOPE AS ESSENTIAL TO MOVING FORWARD ON AN AGREEMENT.
SEMBLER

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